



Criteria for Regional Marketing Systems and Regional Food Products

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One of the goals of RegioMarket is to enhance the development of regional cooperations on the production and marketing of food products. Some of the RegioMarket partners have vast experience in setting up such systems, others are in the decision making process for establishing regional marketing structures, joint marketing efforts or a regional branding system.

Partners cooperating in RegioMarket have a consensus on following key success factors for regional marketing systems:

- **Transparency and honesty:** When consumers buy a regional product they can rely on the regional origin of the majority of the ingredients. Regional products shall create trust between customers - whether they live in the region or are visitors - and the producers in the region.
- **Criteria and controls:** The definition of “regional products” does not only include provenance, i. e. origin from a specific region, but also specified quality and production schemes with respect to this region. Criteria for the quality and the production methods need to be defined objectively and controlled by an external organism of control. This will bring credibility to the commercial offer of that region and can be an efficient way to promote, save and develop the region with its natural and cultural heritage.
- **Producer and consumer dual approach:** Partners on both the production and the consumption side shall cooperate. Economic and non-economic groups should equally cooperate to gain success of the initiative.
- **City-Land-Partnership:** Consumers in cities and towns shall get the opportunity to not only receive goods and services like food or energy from their countryside but also link to the producers and estimate their efforts. In this sense regional products shall carry a message to the consumer: you are responsible and you can take action to preserve the places you live at or go for week end or for holidays.



The following set of criteria and indicators are meant to be a starting point for the definition of a regional market support or branding system. Regional initiatives are free to adapt the set of criteria as needed. However, the RegioMarket partners agree that only if a certain degree of coherence with the following criteria is in place the regional market system shall be called “RegioMarket approved”.

Reasons for coming up with a set of RegioMarket criteria comprise:

- o Regional market systems in the Alpine space shall be built on a high level of commonly accepted values linked with the Alpine territories and places.
- o Producers shall get indications towards better production - in terms of product quality and production methods that help to preserve the Alpine Space.
- o Consumers shall get a promise from the producers and start reflexion on the feasibility of extended regional supply.

The RegioMarket definition of regional systems and products is not in contradiction with EC regulations Nr. 509/2006 and Nr. 510/2006 (PDO, PGI, TSO). It is meant to give customers transparency which goes beyond those regulations and producers more assistance in defining their regional value adding systems.

Throughout the RegioMarket project, partners developed this set of criteria as a good practice guideline for initiatives that want to establish a credible regional support systems or a regional brand. A second step could be an overall awarding and controlling system and the installation of an authorized organisation. The latter will be discussed at the final RegioMarket workshops.¹

¹ It could be considered to implement a common quality assurance for regional food and energy supply



The criteria set is structured in following groups:

- A) **Structure and Process Criteria:** These criteria describe how development of the regional market system shall be driven in order to optimally involve needed stakeholders and to build a stable regional partnership.
- B) **Partner Criteria:** These requirements apply for people and organizations who are willing to be seen as partners of the regional market system. Only partners who obey to these criteria shall be allowed to use the regional brand, participate in joint marketing activities and get benefit from the system.
- C) **Basic Product and Production Criteria:** These criteria describe requirements that apply for all products of the regional program. In some sense this describes the minimum standard for a product to be allowed to participate in the joint regional market system. Partners from multiple food sectors should come up with a consensus on this base line.
- D) **Specific Product and Production Criteria:** These criteria depend on the very product and shall be defined alongside the entire production-trading-consumption-line. According to the Process and Partner Criteria producers and consumers as well shall be involved in the development of such criteria.



Regional Market System

According to RegioMarket a regional marketing system is a cooperation to produce and sell products from a region in the region or beyond. Such a marketing system is in line with the RegioMarket definition if

- cooperation partners are cooperating according to RegioMarket criteria set A)
- the regional initiative has formally defined their partnership in a statute and set clear partner criteria according to RegioMarket criteria set B) to define the group of regional partners
- more than one product is labelled with a specific regional label issued by the initiative of the cooperation partners
- all products which are produced and marketed by the regional partnership follow the definition of “Regional Product” as specified by RegioMarket (see below).

Such a marketing system shall be allowed to use the RegioMarket quality sign for their general PR purposes. ²

Regional Product

According to the RegioMarket definition a regional product

- can by customers clearly be identified as such (e. g. by using a regional label)
- is produced and marketed by a regional partnership that follows the definition of a “Regional Market System” according to the RegioMarket definition (see above)
- is produced and marketed alongside a clear set of criteria which are in line with RegioMarket criteria sets C) and D).

After approval ³ the regional partnership shall be allowed to use the RegioMarket quality sign in addition to its main brand and/or for marketing and public relations purposes related to products defined in the above sense.

² not necessarily to label specific products

³ Throughout the RegioMarket project partners want to come up with an evaluation scheme to approve regional market systems. For this purpose a measuring system will be attached to the RegioMarket set of criteria which allows to calculate a degree of coherence. If the degree is higher than a to be defined threshold, the system can receive the RegioMarket quality stamp. At the end of the RegioMarket project there will most probably be a proposal for an awarding system and an authorized entity for the RegioMarket label. The feasibility of an awarding system and an authorized entity will be discussed at the PG food workshop in October.



A) Structure and Process Criteria

- The regional marketing initiative supports creation of added value in the region. This implies preserving small scale production facilities, creating and securing work places and building on regional resources as far as possible.
- The regional marketing systems follows the rule of fair pricing. All partners production-trading-chain shall be adequately honoured for the production of the product itself and as well for their contribution to the sanity of nature and culture.
- Throughout the development process and in its structures the regional market system shows a dual structure. Partners on both the production and the consumption side, economic and non-economic groups cooperate to gain success of the initiative.
- When defining “Specific Product and Production Criteria” members from all links alongside the production-trading-consumption-chain are involved.
- The regional partnership has an independent control system for its products built on accredited control institutions as far as possible.
- The initiative seeks cooperation with external stakeholders, such as research institutes, environmental oriented NGOs and others.
- The initiative is open for inter-regional cooperation with other initiatives or institutions in Alpine Space.



B) Partner Criteria

Production and business partners of the regional market system can be

- farmers and producing companies
- trades and logistics companies
- crafts for production and services

or a consortium of such, if they

- have their domicile and production site in the region or can prove that production of the regional products is separated from other products
- have admission to run their business and their production technology provide high quality workplaces in terms of technical equipment
- fully respect social rights of their employees and business partners as defined in European Social Charter
- disclose their production methods to control institutions as well as to consumers if requested
- actively support the development of the producer-consumer-partnership ⁴
- help to overcome the major challenge of climate change by applying energy efficiency means or using renewable energies
- contribute to the preservation and development of the natural and cultural heritage of their region. ⁵

Other partners can be

- gastronomic services
- municipalities
- associations
- institutions

if they follow the above criteria respectively or actively support production partners in doing so, especially by using the offerings of the production partners.

⁴ While details need to be negotiated and settled in a contract partners should as a minimum take part in regular information and qualification meetings on topics like regional marketing, branding, quality management etc.

⁵ Specific contributions in this sense need to be defined per region. However a harmonized goal of having 10 % of the partner's land being dedicated to nature preservation or reserved for extensive production seems to be feasible especially in the Alpine Space, where biodiversity belongs to the major strengths.



C) Basic Product and Production Criteria

In general terms a regional product shall

- add to the palette of regional and/or traditional products
- have an optimal quality and induce high satisfaction on the consumers' side.
- help to create identification of producers and consumers with their region

In order to support those goals the definition of the regional market program shall contain the following generally holding basic criteria and a mechanism to control them:

- Product quality is in line with at least one subnational, national or international quality standard, if such exist for the product.
- Production criteria are built upon at least one national or international multilevel quality standard ⁶ or a subnational standard accepted by EC ⁷.
- Controls of the regional program rely on the established control systems of the respective norms.
- Information about the regional product is free from misleading information about the origin of the product and its ingredients.
- Unprocessed regional food and food with one ingredient only (e. g. meat) is 100 % produced in the region.
- Processing of regional food has to be done inside the region as far as possible. Taking the entire value adding chain at least 2/3 of the final product value have been created in the region. ⁸
- For processed food labelled as regional specialty ingredients of the final product are as far as technically possible from the region and follow the respective basic and specific criteria. The program definition contains following minimum regulations:
 - Ingredients that for technical reasons ⁹ cannot be produced in the region must not exceed a weight threshold of 25 %.
 - The time an animal has to be in the region before being considered a source for a regional product is minimum 2/3 of it's lifetime.
- Non-regional ingredients preferably stem from a neighbouring market system which is in line with RegioMarket criteria (at least bronze).

⁶ e. g. EUREPGAP, IFS, BRC, QS (Germany), QM-Schweizerfleisch

⁷ e. g. Qualitätszeichen Baden Württemberg, UNSER LAND,

⁸ Reference point is the price at which the product is sold from the final production entity.

⁹ This implies that „raw product can be bought cheaper outside the region“ cannot be accepted as a reason to give up the regional supply of ingredients. However, if there is a shortage of supply with raw products that can be accepted as technical reason.



- ❑ Following criteria are in common for all end products unless overwritten in specific criteria:
 - As far as possible preliminary products like seeds or fodder come also from partners of the regional program and follow the basic and specific criteria of the program. If for technical reasons that is not possible they come from neighbouring regions or countries as far as possible.
 - Production of the product itself and of any preliminary product is free from genetic engineering.¹⁰
 - The entire farm does not use sludge or compost from domestic waste.
 - Animals are held according to accepted rules of animal welfare.
 - Nutrition of fields with artificial fertilizers follows the concept of integrated farming¹¹ or specific recommendations based on analyses
 - Use of permitted chemical pesticides is only allowed if biological treatment does not promise success.

¹⁰ This means that neither the product nor the preliminary products fall under regulations (EG) Nr. 1829/2003 and (EG) Nr. 1830/2003 dated 22.09.2003. Furthermore it means that product are free from genetically manipulated organisms (GMO) even if there is no liability of declaration.

¹¹ e. g. „agriculture raisonnée“ in France or „Integrierter Anbau“ in Germany



D) Specific Product and Production Criteria

As indicated in the Basic Product and Production Criteria production follows at least one subnational, national or international multilevel quality standard and undergoes respective controls.

For every product the specific criteria need to explain

- which standard and control scheme shall apply for the product
- which criteria shall apply in addition or to what extent the regional quality programme exceeds those requirements for the very product
- how criteria of the standard shall be exercised and controlled.

According to the Structure and Process Criteria all links alongside the production-trading-consumption-chain should be involved when defining these criteria.

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